

HANDS-FREE FOREARM CARRIER OF ARTICLES

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The invention relates to hands-free article carriers worn on a forearm of a user.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Those who work with their hands often have more tools to work with than hands to hold them. When hands are full, picking up one tool requires that another be put down. Often, an individual will set the tool on a nearby table top, or, depending upon the type of tool, place it in a pocket or attach it to an article of clothing. Hairdressers, for example, frequently clip bobby pins and hair clips to their clothing when working with a client.

[0003] Typically during the course of performing the task, the need arises to use a tool that has been set down. However, the individual often does not immediately remember where she set the tool or finds that she has moved away from easy reach of the tool and must now stretch, turn, bend, or move back to reach it. Aside from being inconvenient and causing fatigue and frustration, these various movements can make individuals who work personally with their clients, such as make-up artists, hairdressers and cosmetologists, appear unprofessional and disorganized. Accordingly, there is a need for an apparatus that permits individuals to have their hands free to serve their clients, but keeps handy the tools of their trades.

SUMMARY

[0004] In one aspect, the invention features a carrier of articles for wearing around a forearm. Described is a carrier of articles for wearing around a forearm. The carrier includes a carrier body having a top side, a center portion, and an end portion on each side of the center portion.

The carrier also includes means for fastening the end portions to each other when the end portions are wrapped around opposite sides of the forearm to secure the carrier to the forearm. A strap extends across at least a portion of the top side of the carrier body and is attached to the top side at a plurality of locations such that a compartment is defined for receiving and holding an article between the strap and the center portion.

[0005] In another aspect, the invention features a carrier of articles for wearing around a forearm. The carrier includes means for providing a carrier body having a top side, a center portion, and an end portion on each side of the center portion, means for fastening the end portions to each other when the end portions are wrapped around opposite sides of the forearm to secure the carrier to the forearm, and strap means, attached to the top side of the carrier body, for receiving and holding an article between the strap means and the center portion.

[0006] In yet another aspect, the invention features a method for constructing a hands-free carrier for wearing around a forearm. A carrier body, having a top side, an underside, a center portion, and an end portion of each side of the center portion, is provided. Means for fastening are attached on the top side of an end portion of the carrier body and on the underside of a second end portion of the carrier body. A strap is attached across the top side of the carrier body at a plurality of locations to produce a compartment for receiving and holding an article between the strap and the center portion.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] The above and further advantages of this invention may be better understood by referring to the following description in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which like numerals indicate like structural elements and features in various figures. The drawings are

not necessarily to scale, emphasis instead being placed upon illustrating the principles of the invention.

[0008] FIG. 1 is a plan view of an embodiment of a hands-free forearm carrier of the present invention.

[0009] FIG. 2 is a plan view of an underside of the carrier of FIG. 1.

[00010] FIG. 3 is a diagram of the forearm carrier being worn around a forearm.

[00011] FIG. 4 is a plan view of another embodiment of a hands-free forearm carrier.

[00012] FIG. 5 is a plan view of another embodiment of a hands-free forearm carrier.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[00013] The present invention features a hands-free carrier for use by individuals, such as manicurists, hairdressers, make-up artists, cosmetologists, dental assistants, medical assistants, and the like, who work with their hands and often switch among various articles or tools in the course of providing their services. The carrier of the invention gives these individuals a mechanism for organizing their tools and keeping them in ready position for when they are needed.

[00014] FIG. 1 shows an embodiment of a hands-free forearm carrier 2 constructed in accordance with the invention. The carrier 2 includes a carrier body 10 having a center portion 12, a right and left end portions 14, 14' on respective sides of the center portion 12, a top side 16 and an underside 18, a front edge 20 and a back edge 22. The size of the carrier 2 can be tailored for different forearm sizes, for the size of the articles to be carried, or both. In this embodiment,

the front edge 20 is longer in length than the back edge 22; thus, the shape of the carrier 2 is generally trapezoidal. The trapezoidal shape provides a greater overlap between end portions 14, 14' than rectangular shapes (see FIG. 4), for medium to large forearms in particular, when the carrier 2 is wrapped around the forearm.

[00015] Each end portion 14, 14' has means for fastening 26, 26', respectively, to the other end portion 14', 14. In one embodiment, the means for fastening 26 includes hook-and-loop material (e.g., VELCRO®). One component (i.e., hook or loop) of this material is attached to the top side 16 of the right end portion 14 and the corresponding mating component is attached to the underside 18 of the left end portion 14'. The placement of the hook-and-loop material on the top side 16 and underside 18 can be reversed; that is, one component is attached to the top side 16 of the left end portion 14' and the corresponding mating component is attached to the underside 18 of the right end portion 14. Preferably, the hook component of the hook-and-loop material is attached to the top side 16 so that when the carrier 2 is wrapped around the forearm, the hook structures, which may be abrasive to the skin, face away from the surface of the forearm.

[00016] To produce an adequate attachment between the end portions 14, 14', the hook-and-loop material covers most of the end portion 14, 14'. One of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that other means for fastening together the end portions 14, 14' can be used without departing from the principles of the invention. Examples of other fastener means include, but are not limited to, snaps, clasps, latches, hooks, belts and buckles, and zippers.

[00017] Extending laterally across the top side 16 of the center portion 12 and attached (i.e., stitched or sewn) at various places 24 to the center portion 12 is a strap 28. These places 24 of

attachment to the carrier body 10 form various compartments 30, 30' (generally 30) for holding articles or tools 32. In general, to place an article 32 (e.g., haircutting shears or eyeliner pencils) into one of the compartments 30, a user slides the article 32 between the strap 28 and the top side 16 of the center portion 12. For some types of articles, such as bobby pins and hair clips, the strap 28 provides an edge to which the user can clip the article. Typically, a portion of the article 32 remains outside of the compartment 30 so that the user can readily grasp and remove the article 32.

[00018] In one embodiment, the strap 28 is made of elastic material. The elasticity of the strap 28 holds the articles 32 firmly against the center portion 12. Non-elastic embodiments of the strap 28 (e.g., strings, belts, bands) can be used without departing from the principles of the invention, provided the strap 28 when attached to the carrier body 10 is sufficiently taut to hold the articles 32 securely against the top side 16 of the center portion 12.

[00019] Preferably, the strap 28 extends laterally across the center portion 12 (i.e., substantially parallel to the front edge 20). In another embodiment, the strap 28 extends vertically across the center portion 12 (i.e., perpendicular to the front edge 20). Various embodiments of the carrier 2 have straps of different length and in different numbers. For example, in one embodiment, the strap 28 extends across the entire width of the center portion 12 and is attached at the interfaces between the end portions 14, 14' and the center portion 12. In another embodiment, the strap 28 does not fully extend across of the center portion 12; that is, the strap 28 is shorter in length than the width of the center portion 12. In yet another embodiment, multiple straps extend laterally across the center portion 12. Such straps can be laterally or vertically aligned with each other on the top side 16 of the center portion 12, laterally

or vertically offset from each others (i.e., some nearer or farther from the front or back edges 20, 22 of the center portion 12), or combinations thereof.

[00020] Typical embodiments of the forearm carrier 2 have as few as one compartment 30 and as many as twenty, although embodiments with more than one compartment 30 take fuller advantage of the benefits of the invention and embodiments with more than twenty compartments 30 can be constructed without departing from the principles of the invention.

[00021] Compartments 30 can have various sizes or styles. Some compartments 30 are generally flat, for receiving articles 32 such as haircutting shears, bobby pins and hair clips. Other compartments 30' are generally tubular for receiving rounder articles, such as eyeliner pencils, blush brushes and eyebrow brushes. In general, the particular style and sizes of the compartments 30 depend upon the particular use of the forearm carrier 2 (e.g., make up artists, manicurists). In some embodiments, one or more of the compartments 30 are aligned with a pocket 34 for receiving the end of the article 32 held by that compartment 30. The pocket 34 can provide a measure of protection against injury, for example, from a pointed tip of haircutting shears.

[00022] Attached at the front edge 20 of the center portion 12 is an optional protective cover 36 made of soft material that can be folded over the articles 32 (e.g., when the carrier 2 is not being worn and is set on a table top). A fastener (not shown) can be placed on the top side 16 of the center portion 12 and a corresponding fastener (not shown) on the top side of the cover 36 so that the cover 36 can be secured when folded over the articles 32. The cover 36 can be made of various materials, such as, but not limited to, nylon, silk, suede, and leather. Referring also to FIG. 2, the underside of the protective cover 36 has means for fastening 38 the cover 36 to the

underside 18 of the center portion 12. Sewn to the underside 22 of the center portion 12 are means for fastening 38' to corresponding fasteners 38 on the underside of the protective cover 36. By use of the fastening means 38, 38' the user can fold under and secure the cover 36 to the center portion 12 when wearing the carrier 2 around the forearm. In one embodiment, the fastening means 38 includes the hook-and-loop material described above.

[00023] The carrier body 10 is constructed of layers of various materials sewn together. In one embodiment, a layer of neoprene material is sandwiched between layers of duck cloth. The neoprene material gives the carrier 2 structure that provides a measure of stiffness for supporting the articles 32. The carrier materials are machine-washable. Other materials, such as nylon, leather, suede, vinyl, plastic, and spandex, can also be used to construct other embodiments of the carrier body 10.

[00024] FIG. 3 shows the hands-free forearm carrier 2 being worn around a forearm 50 of a user. Although shown to be worn on the left forearm 50, the forearm carrier 2 can be worn on the right forearm without departing from the principles of the invention. When the carrier 2 is worn, the underside 18 of the center portion 12 faces the forearm, and the protective cover 36 is folded between the center portion 12 and the top surface of the forearm and fastened to the underside 18. In this position, the articles 32 are located on the top side of the forearm, visible to the user, and readily available for use. Further, the hands of the user are thus free to perform the task at hand, including sliding articles 32 into and out of the compartments 30 of the carrier 2.

[00025] While the invention has been shown and described with reference to specific preferred embodiments, it should be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and detail may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention

as defined by the following claims. For example, FIG. 4 shows another embodiment of a hands-free forearm carrier 2'. In this embodiment, the shape of carrier 2' is generally rectangular, with the front edge 20' and back edge 22' of the center portion 12' being approximately equal to each other in length. Such an embodiment provides adequate securing around small to medium forearms. As another example, FIG. 5 shows an embodiment of a hands-free forearm carrier 2'' in which the compartments 30'' are pouches or pockets that are open at one end and closed at the other (rather than open at both ends, as shown in FIG. 1). When user inserts an article 32 into a compartment 30'', only one end of the article 32 extends out from the cover of the compartment 30''.

[00026] What is claimed is: